

UNITY PROPOSALS

The "Declaration" next offers thirteen propositions which contain what has been called Campbell's platform for unity. He himself considered that he was merely opening up the matter for discussion. Here, reworded and abbreviated are his proposals:

One Church.

1. "The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him in all things according to the Scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else; as none else can be truly and properly called Christians."

Without Schism.

2. The One Body manifests its life in numerous separate congregations. These ought all to acknowledge one another in the spirit of Christ and, avoiding schism, show a united front to the world.

Truth Unites.

3. Nothing should be considered binding upon Christians or be made a condition of church membership that is not "expressly taught and enjoined in the Word of God." Nothing is essential to the life of the Church which has not the authority of Christ or His apostles in express terms or by approved precedent.

Dividing the Word.

4. Old and New Testaments together make the perfect revelation of the Divine Will and in this respect cannot be separated. But it is the New Testament that indicates the worship, discipline and government of the Christian Church and the duties of its members.

In Opinions, Liberty.

5. When the Scriptures give no clear guidance, no man should bind his views on others. "Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the Church, or be made a term of communion among Christians, that is not as old as the New Testament."

6. Similarly, deductions from and interpretations of Scripture, while helpful as such, must not be made essential or become tests of loyalty.

7. Creeds are useful in summarising truth and excluding error, but should never be made terms of Christian communion.

Church Membership.

8. Complete knowledge of Christian truth is not required of those becoming Church members. What is needed is knowledge of our need, of the sufficiency of Christ, and a disposition to obey Him in all things as these become known to us through His Word.

Mutual Recognition.

9. All Christians should recognise one another as such and manifest love as brethren. All are equally "children of the same family and Father, temples of the same Spirit, members of the same body . . . objects of the same Divine love. 'Whom God hath thus joined together no man should dare to put asunder.'"

Evils of Division.

10. Division among Christians is antichristian. "It destroys the visible unity of the body of Christ, as if he were divided against himself, excluding and excommunicating a part of himself." It is anti-scriptural, a direct violation of Christ's command. It is anti-natural engendering hate and opposition amongst those who should love one another as Christ has loved them.

Causes of Division.

11. Division is, caused, in some instances, by partial neglect of the Will of God. In other cases it results from exalting human opinions into Christian essentials.

Achieving Unity.

12. All that is necessary to the perfection and purity of the Church is that it be composed only of those who have professed faith in Christ and obedience to Him in all things according to the Scriptures and who express this allegiance by their lives; that ministers, duly and Scripturally qualified, teach only the articles of faith and holiness expressly revealed in the Word of God and in all their ministrations keep close to the Divine commands, without any additions of human opinion.

Human Expedients.

13. Where the Scriptures do not state the method of obeying Divine commands there should be freedom in introducing and changing the human expedients necessary for such obedience.